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ceived with enthusiasm at New Orleans, and such other places in that vicinity as he visited, either in the course of military duty, or to look after his property. Taking post at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, he there remained mostly during the canvass that resulted in his election to the Presidency. His part in this canvass was probably nothing; and no doubt he fully justified, under the trying temptations that beset such a position, the high compliment, already quoted, paid to him, in this respect, by the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts. Mr. Webster, in the same address, further remarks, "unfortunately, his (General Taylor's) career at the head of the government was short;" adding, that he believed "he had left on the mind of the country a strong impression, first, of his absolute honesty and integrity of character and his good sense, and lastly, of the mildness and friendliness of his temper towards all his countrymen. But, he is gone!* He is ours no more, except in the force of his example."

That example would not be without its beneficial influence in a large degree, even if it only showed a character, which, through all the changes of a long life, marked by achievements of great renown, never lost its simplicity and honesty. Those who saw General Taylor before the defence of Fort Harrison, and saw him after the battle of Buena Vista, saw in him no change. Those who sat down with him in his mess-tent in the field, and afterwards sat down with him at his table in the Presidential mansion, saw as little change. The man was the same. Few men pass through such ordeals in such wise. Those who do, have a dignity of nature that may well give force to an example.

ART. II. — *Report to the Corporation of Brown University on Changes in the System of Collegiate Education*; read March 28, 1850. Providence: George H. Whitney. 8vo. pp. 76.

THE Report to the Corporation of Brown University on the subject of changes in the Collegiate System of Education,

* General Taylor died at Washington City, on the 9th of July, 1850.

is understood to be the work of the distinguished President of that institution ; and on that account, if on no other, will receive an attentive and respectful consideration by the public. Few men seem to have given greater attention to the subject, and few certainly have had a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with it practically, as well as theoretically. The report is, in many respects, such as might be expected from the author. It is an ingenious and elaborate discussion of the whole subject of college education, as carried into practice in our country, and more particularly in New England. To this topic it is entirely devoted. The author manifests no prejudice, and we presume feels none, against any particular institution ; he indulges in no criticisms upon the manner in which any college is conducted ; his remarks are upon the system of collegiate education generally, and this point he discusses with the gravity and propriety due to its importance. What is original in this report is expressed in perspicuous and dignified language, such, we trust, as will be imitated by all who may either support or impugn his doctrines.

We cannot extend the same praise to all the quotations, which are somewhat largely introduced. We certainly pay very little respect to such sweeping, and, to say the least, not over charitable, remarks, as “ that the number of pious young men in colleges is less than it was a few years since.” Nor do we think that our author’s argument is much indebted to his long extracts from the *Edinburgh Review*. The pleasantness of those passages (or what was so intended) does not strike us either as very elegant, or very happy ; and the reasoning, whether it be deemed conclusive or fallacious, is founded on a state of things to which there is little or nothing parallel in this country. A thorough classical scholar is, we know, very rare, even in our older settlements ; but certainly not more rare than a popular audience who cannot speak their mother tongue with a tolerable enunciation, and cannot understand and relish an argument expressed in perspicuous and elegant language.

But our chief concern is with the general purport of this Report. We do not propose formally to reply step by step to the author’s positions, though we must of necessity allude in the course of our remarks to many of the most prominent of them, but to offer a few desultory remarks on the great

question which forms the theme of his argument, and which has been, for some years, a frequent topic of public discussion as well as private conversation.

Is the system of college education now existing in our country one which in the main should be upheld and cherished, or do the intellectual wants of the community require a radical alteration? To do full justice to this question is a task which we have neither the ability, nor the space, to accomplish. But the subject is one which has never failed to interest the community, and which was never more deeply interesting than now. No examination of it, if made with any fairness, can be wholly without advantage. Before proceeding directly to the examination, we beg leave to offer one or two preliminary remarks.

In the first place, we think that very little aid in our investigations is to be derived from the experience of foreign countries. Our college system, though transplanted at first from England, has been very essentially modified in the lapse of two centuries. We have been absolutely forced to omit, as well as to add, in many important particulars; and the present system of college education is widely different from that now existing in any foreign country. In the actual condition of our community, no European system of university education could be practically carried out here without many substantial variations. It is difficult, moreover, to learn what is the opinion of the most intelligent men of any foreign country, (England for example,) in regard to the system of education there existing. The assertions of anonymous writers, or even of a few well known writers of high distinction, are far from conclusive evidence on this point. It is easy to find such vouchers on either side of that question. We feel, therefore, little concerned in determining which party in any such case holds the better opinion; we are, happily, not driven to the dicta of foreign writers, or the experience of foreign communities, as our only or chief sources of light on this extensive and interesting question. They have their value; but it is to our domestic experience, to the history of our own colleges, that we principally look for guidance. That history is fraught with interest and instruction, and we shall be pardoned in devoting a short time to its contemplation, as absolutely necessary to any one who would form any fair judgment of our subject.

For more than threescore and ten years Harvard was the only collegiate seminary in North America. It is a remark of one of the most distinguished ornaments of the honored institution which stands next in succession,* "that Yale College owes to Harvard a debt of obligation, perhaps for her very existence, which she will never be slow to acknowledge. From her, for a series of years, she derived her officers, her modes of instruction, her moral code, and internal discipline." The system of education at all our New England colleges has been all along, and now is, so far as it goes, formed on the model of that of Harvard. Whatever differences may be thought to exist between this seminary and any other of the same class, to the disadvantage of either, no one, we presume, will deny the substantial correctness of the preceding remark. The history, therefore, of education as pursued in Harvard College is the history of our system of college education generally in New England; and it is from a brief sketch of that history, that we can best derive the means of judging of the practical effects of that system.

The foundation of Harvard College by the little colony of Massachusetts Bay, within ten years after its first settlement, has often been the theme of the ablest and most eloquent eulogies; and no wonder. No language can well do justice to the far reaching sagacity and devoted liberality which led to this noble enterprise. It is not speaking too strongly to say, that it is without a parallel in history; and it would be absolutely impossible to trace out all the benefits, religious and political, as well as literary, which have resulted from it to our commonwealth and to our common country. What would have been our condition, had the views of our fathers been less elevated; — had they been contented with such provisions for the cause of learning as might have appeared best suited to their actual condition? If some of their public measures were of more importance, (the foundation, for instance, of our system of free schools,) there was not one which was more original and impressive, not one which showed a more comprehensive and disinterested solicitude for the intellectual and moral wants of future generations. We are strongly reminded of the spirit which prompted the obscure

* See Professor Silliman's remarks at the inauguration of President Everett.

and all but nameless Greek colony at Pæstum to erect those massive and lofty temples, which have stood all but unimpaired for thousands of years, and yet stand, the lonely but gigantic monuments of its existence.

The establishment of Harvard College, when we consider the situation of the little colony of Massachusetts Bay at that period, was, both in an intellectual and moral point of view, a not less magnificent conception. It was an attempt to transplant to these untrodden shores, in its full grown proportions, the highest description of education, which then existed in the most refined communities of the old world, and which had there been the growth of centuries. No other cause than the *religious spirit*, the same spirit which, whether enlightened or misguided, has produced such vast results wherever it has been roused into intense action, could have rendered such a measure an object even of serious contemplation. It was the great purpose of our fathers, in this bold and deep laid project, to preserve and propagate true and unadulterated religion by supplying our pulpits with a succession of wise as well as devout pastors. It was therefore as a place of education for the ministry, that Harvard College was at first chiefly designed, and it was to this profession that a large proportion of its graduates for the first half century devoted themselves.

But at no time was the college, in profession or in practice, a mere theological seminary. The zeal of our fathers, though partaking, of necessity, of the characteristics of the religious feeling of that age, was an enlightened and manly zeal, which sought its ends by the diffusion of knowledge and the promotion of a spirit of inquiry. If, in the words of the excellent Robinson as applied to the great leader of his own denomination, John Calvin, "they saw not all things," they certainly were not disposed to shut their eyes against farther light. The college, from its very origin, has been administered with a liberality which existed in no seminary of the same description previous to the latter half of the eighteenth century, and which, to say the least, has not been *often* imitated in succeeding times. No confession of faith is imposed by its charter as a qualification for any office of instruction or government, or by any of its successive codes of laws, from that established in 1642 to the present day, as a prerequisite to admission, for

a degree, or for college honors, — a liberality which we can better appreciate, when we reflect, that to this day, every candidate for a degree at Oxford or at Cambridge must signify his assent to the doctrines of the Church of England. The spirit of independent thought and free inquiry which was spread abroad through the influence of such a seminary was the surest corrective for whatever of bigotry and intolerance existed in the minds of its early patrons. The stern and exclusive orthodoxy of the first settlers soon began to give place to a wiser policy and more enlarged charity. The lamentable injustice and hardships exercised towards Dunster, for mere errors of opinion, (or what were so deemed,) was not repeated towards his successor Chauncy, who was no less heretical, but who held his office without disturbance or censure till his death; and not an instance is on record of the punishing or molesting of any student on account of his religious tenets.

The systems of instruction established by President Dunster, and varied from time to time by his successors as occasion seemed to require, if considered merely in a literary point of view, appear to breathe the same enlarged and liberal spirit. Nothing more was absolutely required for a bachelor's degree than the ability to construe the Old and New Testaments into Latin. But the course of instruction certainly included all the sciences which were then deemed of importance. The table of Theses of the commencement of 1642, is preserved by Hutchinson, and is formed of propositions in grammar, rhetoric, logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics. There is every reason to believe, that these sciences were as well taught by Dunster and Chauncy, both of them distinguished graduates of Cambridge in England, as at either of the universities of the parent country. It need not be said that the course of education, both in substance and form, was of a highly scholastic, as well as ecclesiastical description. In this respect, however, it only partook of the character of all education then given in the higher seminaries of England and the continent of Europe. How could it possibly be otherwise? The great reformation in the physical and intellectual sciences had scarcely dawned. The year in which the first commencement of Harvard College was held, was rendered memorable by the death of Galileo, and the birth of Newton.

The Copernican system was still a heresy in the judgment of the Catholic Church, and a disputed hypothesis in the learned world. The great works of Locke and Newton were not published till nearly the close of the seventeenth century; and the luminaries of the schools were only beginning to fade before the broad light of the Baconian philosophy.

“It was the time, when 'gainst the breaking day
Rebellious night yet strove, and still repined;
For in the East appeared the morning gray,
And yet some lamps in Jove's high palace shined.”

But the college was not slow in adopting such improvements in its course of education, as must have been suggested by the mighty changes in the world of science, which marked the close of the seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth century. In the early part of Holyoke's presidency, and probably for some time previous, Locke and Watts were the text-books in intellectual science, Ward in mathematics, (a work greatly resembling the valuable compilation since made by President Webber,) Euclid in Geometry, and Gravesande as translated by Desaguliers, (both of them disciples and warm admirers of Newton,) in Natural Philosophy.

It must be confessed, however, that the amount actually taught in Harvard College, at any period previous to the Revolution, was exceedingly scanty. The text-books just mentioned, constituted all then in use, with the addition of Wollebius's Compend of Theology, Virgil, Cicero's Select Orations and Offices, the Greek Testament and a little of Homer, and Gordon's Geographical Grammar; — comprising a much smaller amount of knowledge, on the whole, than is now required for admission. This scanty list continued almost unchanged till the year 1763, and probably several years longer; and with the writing, occasionally, of Latin syllogisms, it formed almost the whole course of college study. It was far from sufficient to occupy the time of the student; and no academy or high school could now hold a respectable rank with so meagre a list of required studies. The truth is, in the words of President Quincy, that the best part of the education at this college, and that for which its students have been everywhere distinguished, was that they were taught, according to the language used by President Mather, “*libere philosophari, et in nullius jurare verba magistri.*” In this

branch of study, at least, they were any thing but dull proficients. We find that the right of resisting the supreme magistrate for the preservation of the Commonwealth, was publicly maintained in a thesis at commencement, in 1740, by SAMUEL ADAMS ; and one of the candidates for the master's degree in 1736, proposed to call in question the doctrine of the Trinity, which was permitted by the corporation, and only prevented by the interposition of the overseers.

The New England church, though almost universally Calvinistic, soon had, like all other churches, its more orthodox and more liberal party ; and the contest between them was fiercely and pertinaciously carried on for more than half a century. The control of the college was then, as it has been since, one of the chief prizes of the contest. In almost every instance after the division had become decided and conspicuous, the liberal party prevailed ; and their ascendancy seems to have been finally secured by the election of Holyoke, whose long and distinguished presidency extended from the year 1736 to the eve of the American Revolution. When that great crisis approached, the alumni of the college showed, in a still more striking manner, at what school, and in what spirit, they had been educated. They were found manfully doing battle, in many cases in more than a figurative sense, for the cause of liberty. The great majority of the graduates of Harvard, as well as of our other colleges, of whatever profession or calling, were devoted unreservedly to this sacred object. We shall not be suspected of maintaining that this spirit of liberty, this stern determination to resist all tyranny in the beginning and to the last, was peculiar to the educated men (so called) of our country, or that such sentiments owed their birth or their vigor exclusively to our colleges. But that those seminaries contributed materially, directly and indirectly, and that probably to an extent far greater than can be fully traced, to our emancipation from the power of Great Britain, as well as to the well-ordered and stable liberty which has arisen from the ruins of that power, is what no one, versed in the slightest degree in American history, will pretend to call in question. We know of no terms in which justice has been better done, in the same compass, to the character of our New England colleges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, than those found in Dr. Wayland's Report, page 11, to which we refer our readers.

The next paragraph in the Report is one which, we must confess, we have read with no little surprise. It commences with the two following statements, couched, it will be perceived, in emphatic language, with the slightest possible qualification.

“It ought not here to escape remark, that these colleges were almost wholly without endowment. They were nearly self-supporting institutions.”

Now, let it be recollected that until the year 1707, that is, for seventy years from its foundation, Harvard College was the only one in New England. In 1707, Yale College was fairly put in operation; and these two were our only New England colleges till the establishment of Brown University in 1764, and of Dartmouth College in 1769; or, in general terms, Harvard and Yale may be termed the only colleges in New England in full operation, previous to the Revolution. No one, we think, who recollects the history of Harvard during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, can assent, for a moment, to the propositions above quoted. It certainly was a material inadvertence, — for to this cause we ascribe the error, — to lay down any such propositions as generally true, in disregard of the striking facts recorded in so many pages of every historian of Harvard College, from Mather to Eliot. These facts can all be found clearly and fully stated, in the valuable work of President Quincy.

Not one of the college edifices standing at the commencement of the Revolution was erected wholly, or in any great degree, at the expense of the college treasury. All of them were monuments of public or private liberality. Every professorship then existing was founded, and in a great degree supported, by funds derived from the source last named; and down to the year 1780, the salary of the President from the beginning, and from the year 1750 those of the Professors, also, were paid, in great part, directly from the public chest.* The noble benefactions of the Hollis family, for successive generations, were all bestowed within the same period; and the college was, on the whole, more liberally endowed, — regard being had to the means of the donors, and this consideration, according to reason and Scripture, furnishes the truest

* Quincy's *History*, vol. ii. pp. 224—241.

standard of liberality, — than any college now existing in our country.

In making these statements, we are not impelled merely by the wish to correct what we conceive to be a grave historical error. Those who peruse the Report before us will find our author's assumption, that before the Revolution our colleges existed and flourished almost without external aid, is made to serve as a basis to a grave charge against our college systems of education at the present day. We are, at any rate, highly gratified in finding that there is no difference of opinion between our author and ourselves, and we think it may be added, no difference of opinion in the public mind generally, as to the benefits derived by New England and by our common country from our colleges as they existed previously to the Revolution. So much as this, we trust, will be collected from the sketch we have given (however brief and imperfect) of the history of education in Harvard University, the forerunner and the model, if not the parent, of all others. So much as this seems, at least, to have been believed and felt by the wise patriots who formed our Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, and commended the university to the especial care of their posterity, in more than one emphatic passage of that instrument, for the reason, as most briefly and comprehensively stated, that "the encouragement of arts and sciences, and all good literature, tends to the honor of God, the advantage of the Christian religion, and the great benefit of this and the other United States of America."

Such, then, without question, were our New England colleges previous to the Revolution. What was actually taught, was, as we have said, confessedly very little. Those graduates who considered their literary career closed by the conferring of their degree, were certainly satisfied with exceedingly scanty intellectual acquisitions. Of these, as well as of those who failed to learn even the little which they were enjoined to study, there were doubtless many; and the nature of all institutions, not to say of man himself, must be greatly changed, before such results can be precluded. But there must also have been many, who not only fully improved every opportunity offered to them, but who did far more; who caught the inspiration which prevails in every well-ordered

place of public education, and in every community of intelligent and emulous young men, and in whose minds their college exercises, few and short as they were, served only to excite an inextinguishable thirst for more extended knowledge.

Has all this changed? Are our colleges now less deserving of the public favor than in time past? Or is the condition of the community so altered that the colleges can no longer exercise the same beneficial influence as formerly, unless their system of education be upturned from its very foundations? We would premise, that in any reply we may make to these questions, we shall refer more especially to Harvard College, not simply because we are better acquainted with that institution than any other, but for the reasons given in the beginning of this article, and for the further reason that we believe its condition is more frequently and fully disclosed to the public than that of any other college in New England. It is the only one of the colleges, according to Dr. Wayland, which publishes an annual report of the state of its finances and of its general position. It is placed in a densely peopled region, almost within the precincts of a great city, and is closely scrutinized alike by its vigilant opponents and its solicitous friends. If the remark of Alexander Hamilton be correct, that jealousy is often the surest proof of strong attachment, Harvard College must be deeply seated in the affections of a large and intelligent portion of our community. Its supposed merits and demerits stand in bold relief before the public, and are almost daily the subject of public or private discussion. "We work," one of its most distinguished Presidents has said, "in a glass hive." Apparently for these reasons, the course of education existing in this university, has been selected, not unfairly, by Dr. Wayland as a specimen of our collegiate system generally. As such, we shall all along refer to it. With the complaints made against this institution, in particular, as distinguished from its sister seminaries, we have at present nothing to do.

Were, then, those who were graduated at Harvard before the Revolution better educated on the whole, better fitted to play their respective parts in the great theatre of after life, than their successors of our time? We are told, and it is the first time we have seen the assertion, that the mind of the

student was then suffered to invigorate itself by reflection and reading ; and hence, with far less perfect means than are now possessed, it seems to have attained a more manly development. We trust we have given our readers some idea of the amount actually taught at Harvard during our Colonial and Provincial existence. If it be a merit in a seminary of education that the amount of instruction given is small, it is certainly one which our New England colleges possessed in a high degree before the Revolution, and which they could recover now on cheap and easy terms.

But we are told, and public opinion is invoked to ratify the assertion, that the alumni of the college, previous to the Revolution, were greater statesmen, jurists, and divines than their successors ; that the average of professional ability among us is declining, &c. It is candidly admitted in immediate connection with these remarks, that we are all, to a considerable extent, *laudatores temporis acti*, the eulogists of the past. There is certainly in this country much in the past to eulogize. We had great men previous to the Revolution, and we have already said that their college education, such as it was, had much to do with their greatness. But that this education was any the better from being incomplete, is, we think, something worse than a paradox ; and that there were no other circumstances which contributed to the greatness of those distinguished men, or at least facilitated the manifestation of it to their country and the world, is any thing but true. Much of their renown, if not of their intrinsic power, was owing to the great crises which called forth all their talents and all their exertions at the peril of liberty, life, and character. Should such calls now arise, we have no doubt that they would be responded to as fully and nobly as by the generation of Seventy-six. What specific evidence exists for the assertion that *professional* talent among us is declining, we are at a loss to know. Our author quotes, in this connection, a remark of the Edinburgh Review, "that it would be difficult to find at present, among the most eminent leaders in Westminster Hall, any whose academical course was crowned with honors." If this remark is considered as applicable to New England we think it will meet with many dissentients. We venture to say that no list will be made, by any competent judge, of the

leaders of the bar in Boston (we are sure this is not a solitary, and we cannot see why it is not a fair, specimen) which will not be composed in great part of the names of distinguished graduates of some of our colleges. Nor have we seen any evidence offered that our divines and physicians are, on the whole, less able, less learned, or less skilful, than those who have gone before them. How, indeed, should they be? The whole community as a mass, is supposed by no one, to be less intellectual or less educated than formerly. Parishioners, patients, and clients, (and this includes every one, for every one is called upon to act and to suffer in one at least of these capacities,) are more enlightened than formerly; and it is not to be supposed that they would intrust the care of their health, the adjustment of their controversies, or the ministry of their souls, to less competent agents, or that their standard of competency will be less elevated.

But the question, whether the minds of pupils are less developed and strengthened by a college education now than a century since, can be settled by a more direct test. We propose to bring it to this test by a few questions.

Are the text books now used in our colleges better or worse than those formerly in use? Are our teachers more learned and skilful, or less so? Are the performances at our commencements and exhibitions marked by greater comprehensiveness, depth, and precision than formerly?

We have heard one answer, and only one, given to these questions, and that, in many cases, by men very far from any bias in favor of our system of college education generally.

We do not intend to deny, however, that the alumni of our colleges have not the same relative superiority to the rest of the community enjoyed by their predecessors sixty years since. It is certainly true to a considerable extent, that the productive callings, so called, by which, we suppose, are meant those which produce most money and add most to the physical wealth of the community, are filled with men who have not received a college education; and that the position of these individuals, compared with that of professional men, is far in advance of what it was formerly. But one material cause of this difference is, not that college education is less perfect than it once was, but that education of all other kinds is better. In the last century, few who had not passed

through college were well educated in any way. A common school education, and this was then almost the only education except a collegiate one, comprised little else than some instruction, and that none of the most complete, in reading, writing, and arithmetic. In a certain sense, every man in New England was taught to read and write; and this was certainly infinitely better than no education at all. But the reading of a common English author with a tolerable enunciation, and spelling with exactness, were rare accomplishments. High schools scarcely existed in name or in fact; and normal schools for the education of teachers, except so far as the colleges might be considered such, are, at least with us, the growth of the present generation. All this is now changed, and we rejoice that it is so. Public office and private consideration are, professedly at least, bestowed on those who are most competent and deserving, without inquiring in what seminary, or under what training, their qualifications were acquired, and without making either a college education or the want of it a ground of exclusion. This is as it should be.

Whether our colleges have degenerated since the Revolution is, however, a question principally important for its bearing on another of a more practical and momentous kind, which we have already touched upon; namely, whether our New England system of college education is, on account of what it includes and what it fails to include, unfitted to supply the great intellectual wants of the community. It is said that education at our colleges is not practical, and that, for many of the most important avocations of human life, the student leaves college as unprepared as he enters it. College education, we are often told, does not make better farmers, mechanics, or merchants, and does little or nothing to develop the physical resources of the country.

That such charges are true to the full extent, certainly cannot be maintained. The elements of many practical sciences are taught, and well taught too, at more than one of our New England colleges. Besides, the general education given in all those institutions, has or is supposed to have, a value in preparing the student for whatever avocation he may afterwards select. To develop even the physical resources of our country, we know of nothing better, as a

first step, than to develop the minds which are to carry on the work. But if it be meant that our colleges do not prepare young men fully for agricultural, or mechanical, or mercantile pursuits, this, no doubt, is true. It may be added, that the knowledge required for the successful pursuit of most avocations of those descriptions cannot, to any thing like the full extent, be communicated in any collegiate seminary. Take, for instance, the business of agriculture. It is certainly possible to teach the elements of this great science in a single course of lectures. In the hands of a lecturer like Professor Low, of Edinburgh, this subject might be rendered highly interesting to every college student; and that, too, at the cost of very little time, and a moderate degree of agreeable exertion. He might thus qualify himself, certainly not to be a skilful farmer, but to appreciate fully the importance of this great branch of human industry, and to pay to it not only a just, but an intelligent homage. He could at least lay a foundation for farther advancement, should his thoughts be directed to agriculture at any subsequent period, either as a leading pursuit, or as a favorite recreation. We think, therefore, that the study of the *elements* of agriculture might be introduced into our colleges or our schools, with the highest benefit, not so much to those pupils who were already practically acquainted with farming, as to those who might otherwise grow up in profound ignorance of the subject. But we doubt exceedingly the possibility of carrying instruction in agriculture, in any of our colleges, much beyond its elements, (without converting those seminaries into mere farm schools); and we believe that whoever desires to be a thorough farmer must leave his place of instruction, be it what it may, at an early age, and enter at once on actual business. But if it be necessary to carry agricultural schooling to a farther extent, if there is, in fact, a demand for a complete education in agriculture, which shall occupy the time of the student till he shall reach the age of eighteen or twenty, we are satisfied that this object can only be accomplished by separate institutions for an extensive course of instruction in this art, resembling the school at Hofwyl. It is for the State or for individuals, if they deem it expedient, to found such institutions.

These remarks may be extended to the pursuits of the merchant or mechanic. No man, practically acquainted with

either of these pursuits, would say that specific instruction in them, beyond the teaching of a few simple elements, could be given at any college to the slightest advantage, or that such institutions could be any thing better than very imperfect substitutes for a good workshop or counting room.

Another objection has, however, been urged against our colleges; namely, that they fail to fulfil the promises held forth to the pupils and their friends, or, in other words, that the education which they give is not thorough of its kind. This complaint is made with the greatest frequency and earnestness, in relation to the instruction given by those seminaries in classical learning. It is this objection which has led, in no small degree, to such animadversions on our whole system of colleges, as we find in Dr. Wayland's report, in the remarks quoted by him from a pamphlet by one of our most distinguished writers, and in the speeches and writings of many eminent scholars. It is often said that our youth employ by far the larger portion of their time in learning what is sure, in a few years more, to disappear from their minds, without leaving a token of its existence. Now we are far from denying, that classical education in this country is less complete than in England and Germany; but we think that this difference has been exaggerated, and that, such as it is, it is far from being entirely chargeable to our colleges. Much misapprehension exists in our country, as to the proficiency made by the great mass of English students at Oxford and Cambridge. It may be safely said that the pupil, at either of those universities, who aims only at an academic degree, adds little or nothing to the knowledge which he brings there, and that the university is to him merely an elegant literary retreat, in which he can pass on from early youth to manhood. The few who strive for honors are compelled to task themselves to the utmost, and are rewarded accordingly in after life.

We do not deny that classical scholars in England generally are far superior to those of our own country, in their knowledge of the niceties of the Latin and Greek languages; and we are far from saying that this is an unimportant particular. But their superiority is owing, not to the colleges in England, but to the *schools*. There, the classics are taught with untiring assiduity, and, we may add, with unsparing rigor, by men whose whole lives have been devoted to this sole

occupation. A blunder in quantity is an offence for which there is no palliation and no mercy ; and hence, he who enters Oxford or Cambridge, whether the range of his classical studies has been more or less extensive, has learned, with the last degree of exactness, every book which he has studied at all. It is, under the circumstances of the case, no very discreditable charge against the great majority of classical instructors in this country, to say, that such an exact and finished education is beyond their power to furnish ; and it is a highly gratifying fact that some of our schools (the Latin school in Boston is a striking, though not a solitary instance) are decided exceptions to this general position. But our colleges must be supplied with pupils, if at all, from our schools as they are, or as they may gradually become. The requisitions for admission, at Harvard or Yale, might be so raised, that none, but a few pupils from our large cities, could pass an examination ; and the necessary consequence would be, to reduce the list of annual graduates to the primitive number of ten or a dozen. But if such a step, as is self-evident, is out of the question, the only course left for our colleges is, to make the best of the pupil as he comes to their hands, and to maintain their relative standing in advance of our preparatory seminaries. We have seen no evidence that this is not done.

But if our classical education is less perfect and exact than that of England or of Germany, it is going quite too far to say, (as often is said,) that it is useless or worse than useless. Our youth are not taught to speak in Latin or Greek ; and if they were, their power of doing so would rapidly die out on their leaving the college walls. They are not taught so well as might be desired, to write in those languages. But, to say nothing of the mental discipline derived from classical studies, (a most important point, to which we shall presently recur,) our students, after all, acquire the learned languages as thoroughly as many of the distinguished writers of England acquire those of modern Europe ; that is to say, they can read correctly so much of those languages as may be actually thrown in their way in after life ; and this, if not a creditable, is, at any rate, a comfortable acquisition. The same remark may be extended to many of the other branches of knowledge which form a part of our collegiate course of study. We teach the student enough of several important branches to enable

him to render himself a thorough proficient, in after life, in the one, or the few, to which he may devote himself. This, if you please, is superficial education ; but we believe it is better, in our country, at least, than a truly German scholarship in Latin and Greek, and an utter ignorance on other subjects.

We shall doubtless be met by the hackneyed maxim of Pope,

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing ; ”

but this, like many other of his maxims, owes its currency much more to its point and its melody, than to its real weight, and is obnoxious to the criticism pronounced by a poet, by no means his inferior,* on his celebrated description of the ruling passion : —

“ What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
One triling particular, *truth*, should have missed him.”

We might say with as much logic, though not as much poetry, that a little light was a dangerous thing, and that William the Conqueror’s curfew law was a wise and beneficent regulation. A little knowledge, even if alloyed with pedantry, is after all better than ignorance. Besides, every well-informed man, and no man who is acquainted with only one topic has any claim to the appellation, must of necessity be superficially informed on a variety of subjects. He may know enough, however, to appreciate, if not to emulate, the superior proficiency of others ; and enough for the gratification of his taste, and for enlarging and invigorating his faculties.

But it is time to advert more particularly to the change in our college system of education proposed in Dr. Wayland’s Report. The cardinal principle of this change seems to be set forth, in the fifty-first page of that document, in the following terms : —

“ That the various courses should be so arranged that, in so far as it is practicable, every student might study what he chose, all that he chose, and nothing but what he chose.”

The question raised is, not whether the classics and mathematics should hold their present position in our systems of general education, but whether any such general education

* Burns’s sketch of an epistle to C. J. Fox.

shall exist ; or, shall each college, instead of giving an uniform education to all its pupils, be changed into a collection of schools for the teaching, specifically, of the several professions (using the term in its largest sense) which are followed in our community.

This is certainly a bold innovation. We have great doubt whether it be practicable, or, if practicable, whether it will be a useful measure ; and none at all, that it will, if thoroughly put in practice, be a most costly one. We look, however, on the experiment with no sinister views, and see much cause of congratulation that it is to be attempted under such respectable auspices. But we trust that other colleges will be contented to wait the result, and abstain for the present from radical changes, which, if once made, cannot well be recalled, and which, we think, for the following, if for no other reasons, of exceedingly doubtful expediency.

In the first place, it seems to be assumed, that a student at his entrance into one of our colleges, that is to say, at the age of fifteen or sixteen years, is the best judge of what studies he should pursue. We say the student himself ; for though the choice may be left in terms to the parents or guardians, yet these, in nine cases out of ten, even if competent judges of the matter, will be guided by the representations of the pupil. The consequence in many cases will be, that every branch of study will be avoided which is difficult at the outset. Nothing is easier than for a young lad to persuade himself, that he is naturally unable to comprehend this or that abstruse branch of study. But how many proficients would there be in any science, art, or business whatever, which should be pursued only by those who find their path easy and agreeable at the very beginning ? On the contrary, is not history filled with the names of individuals, whose highest distinction has been gained in those very pursuits which they found at the outset most distasteful and discouraging. That a study is repulsive to a young pupil may, in some very rare instances, be evidence of an absolute incapacity on his part to pursue it ; but it is much oftener a proof that it will afford the very discipline to his mind which is most needed.

But the pupil of sixteen, if of sufficient judgment and industry to select, not the easiest, but the most profitable intellectual pursuits, cannot well decide on his course of educa-

tion, unless prepared also to determine another most important question, — namely, what shall be his avocation in after life. This is a responsibility which, as it is, is cast upon our youth full early. The choice of a profession is, in our country, left in most cases to the student himself, instead of being made for him by his parent, as in many other countries ; and there is rarely a large family of which all the members select the same avocation. This choice is generally made by all who receive a college education at the close of their college life, after the student has had some fair opportunity to ascertain the bent of his genius. And yet a change of avocation subsequently is far from an uncommon occurrence.

Another consequence would probably flow from the plan of allowing the student, at his very entrance on college life, to select his favorite course of study, and abandon entirely the pursuit of every other branch of knowledge, — namely, that education in all cases would be of a very limited kind, and that a man of general information in any reasonable sense of the word would be a rare phenomenon. Every scholar, at the close of his education, might possess an extensive acquaintance with one subject, or with one small class of kindred subjects, and be profoundly ignorant on all other topics. We had supposed that this was considered as one of the most objectionable features of the English system of education. It is that which has called forth the loudest complaints of the opponents of that system, and, we think, with much justice. The classical scholar in England is, it is said, a mere scholar with no knowledge on any topics of interest which date since the Christian era, and with no sympathy in the pursuits, physical or intellectual, of the great mass of his countrymen, who, on their part, are scarcely better acquainted with the history or the literature of Greece or Rome. It is also a common remark, that the English merchant, generally speaking, is a mere merchant, and that by the English farmer, (we mean practical farmer,) his own interests and pursuits are deemed the only objects worthy of the public care and notice. Such results would surely be any thing but desirable in a country like ours, where the usefulness as well as the reputation of every individual may often depend in no small measure on the degree of general knowledge which he may possess in relation to the pursuits and the condition of those who are

engaged in other avocations than his own. Much light would, we think, be thrown on the questions which have formed the theme of our remarks, by a recapitulation of the professed objects of a college education in this country, from the middle of the last century to the present time. It has not been, as seems to be sometimes taken for granted, the aim of those institutions to qualify young men for the practice of the three learned professions, or either of them. The more ancient of our colleges were intended at first as exclusively nurseries of the church ; but this, to the regret of some and the satisfaction of many more, they have long since ceased to be, and the pupil now receives his special preparation for the sacred desk at theological seminaries, and, in most cases, after passing through a college life. Our colleges have never been supposed to be, properly speaking, law or medical schools. Institutions of both these descriptions have indeed been connected with some of our largest colleges ; but the instruction and discipline administered to the pupils of these different schools, as well as the pupils themselves, are entirely distinct. The real object of our colleges is to give to every pupil, who has the time or money to spare for that object, a good general education, not merely because such education is almost indispensable to those who may afterwards prepare themselves for the learned professions, or for purely scientific or literary pursuits, but because it is highly useful to every one, be his subsequent calling what it may ; and because no way has yet been devised by which, in the opinion of the public generally, four years of the period usually allotted to education can be better occupied.

In giving this education, we propose, in the first place, to invigorate and discipline the mind, to prepare it to grapple with whatever subject may come in its way, and search out truth, in whatever path of human industry its subsequent course may lie. It is with this view, though not with this view only, that, in all our colleges, the principal place in their course of study is given to classical and mathematical studies. The knowledge which the pupil of Harvard or Yale actually acquires from the pages of Demosthenes and Tacitus, or of Newton or Laplace, may be far from considerable, and must, in most cases, be fleeting. In a few years, unless subsequently recalled by a reperusal, it must fade away,

in common with all the stores of his early reading, from the tablets of his memory. But the expansion and vigor which must have been given to his mind, by this high converse with some of the mightiest intellects which have ever existed, will endure, it may be, as long as the mind itself. Till it can be shown that other studies are better calculated to effect this great object than the classics and the mathematical sciences, or that a vigorous and well disciplined mind is of no value to any one but a clergyman, lawyer, or physician, we trust that the foundations of our systems of college education will not be changed except upon some better evidence than, we will not say unfounded, but as yet untried, theory.

Secondly, we conceive one leading object of our systems of college education to be, not only to invigorate and expand the mind of the student, but to teach him to communicate his own conceptions most acceptably to others; in other words, to render him, so far as may be, a master of his own language. This we conceive to be the principal object of the study of all classical writers, whether in the language of Greece or Rome, in those of the European Continent, or in English. The student's vernacular tongue is, we need not say, the great instrument by which he is to act upon other men in a public or private capacity; to enable him to use this with effect, or, in simple terms, to write and speak well in English, is an object which holds a high, though by no means too high, a place in our systems of college education. The practice of English composition is enjoined, as far as we know, on the pupils of all our colleges, which differ in this respect, and, we think, greatly for the better, from those of England. It is thought by many, that a vigorous mind will always find a way of clothing its thoughts in apt language. We do not deny that many instances might be brought in favor of this position; but as a mass, we submit that the best writers of our country have been among its best educated men, and we have a striking proof, in one of the most illustrious authors of our own or any country, how far the conceptions of a noble intellect may be disfigured by mere negligence of style. We refer to Jonathan Edwards, a man in whom were combined an acuteness of logic and brilliancy of fancy, which, had his phraseology been worthy of his ideas, would have placed him, as an English classic, in a position

scarcely inferior to any prose writer in our language; but whose grand conceptions, when contrasted with his slovenly and barbarous phraseology, remind us of nothing so much as the wise and mighty Ulysses disguised in the garb of a mendicant.

Thirdly, although, as we have seen, the classics and the mathematics, pure or mixed, hold the principal place in our college system of education, and occupy by far the larger part of the student's time, yet that system is not, as in the English universities, limited entirely to the teaching of one or of both of these great branches of knowledge. From the very beginning, other studies in theology and ethics and metaphysics have formed a part of the college course; and within the last twenty-five years, that course has been so far extended as to comprehend many other studies which have been recommended to the government of our colleges by their popular character, or introduced in compliance with the statutes of professorships founded by the gifts or bequests of liberal individuals. We are free to say that, in Harvard College at least, we think this multiplication of studies has been carried quite too far. It will soon, we think, be a serious question with the government of that institution, whether the list of required or permitted studies shall not be abridged by striking from it such as are of less comparative value, or can be full as well, or better, acquired elsewhere. But we have no desire to return to the English system of education, and confine the pupil to the narrow course of studies pursued in the universities of that country. Some knowledge of the constitution of his State, and his country, of the philosophy of the mind, and of the elements of the leading sciences, should be possessed by every well informed man; and all these can be pursued, at least to the extent to which most of these were taught twenty years since, in our best colleges, without interfering in the slightest degree with the groundwork of the student's education.

Lastly, in all our New England colleges at least, the discipline has been from the beginning, and still is, in a great degree, parental. Our youth enter those colleges, not at the age at which they enter our schools of Law, Theology, and Medicine, or at which young men enter the universities of England or Germany; but at a much earlier period. They

are, in most cases, quite too young to choose their studies wisely, or to be left entirely to their own government, without any vigilant inspection, or constant and active control, on the part of the college faculty. Few New England parents would patronize any college, which was understood to be a seminary, where the pupil was merely *invited* to pursue a regular and industrious life. The relations between the faculty and the students, and those of the members of each of those bodies among themselves, are, to a great extent, similar to those existing among the members of a large family. Could the discipline of an immense university, a mere aggregate of district schools, be administered with the same mixture of kindness and rigor, or generally speaking, with the same constancy and effect? We do not say that it could not; but those who would prove the affirmative by example must look elsewhere than to any university which has yet been established upon such principles.

We have thus stated our views, not so much in regard to the propositions submitted to the public by Dr. Wayland, as upon the great question, whether or not our youth should receive at our colleges a good general education preparatory to the selection and the pursuit of the profession of their choice. It is much easier, on such a topic, to exhaust the patience of our readers than the question itself; to which we shall probably recur on a future occasion. We have endeavored to state the nature and the objects of college education, as conducted in the best colleges of New England. We think our general system, however administered in this or that college, intrinsically good in the main. It was transplanted originally from England, but has since been wisely changed, from time to time, in conformity with the varying circumstances of our growing community. We certainly see no cause for any radical alteration, and no evidence that such alteration is demanded by the deliberate good sense of the community generally. We see new colleges growing up everywhere, modelled essentially on the same principles;* and we find no evidence in the number of students of these colleges, taking those of our whole country into the account,

* We find by the American Almanac, that in 1840, the number of colleges in our country was 93. In 1845, it was 108. At the present time, according to Dr. Wayland, they amount to 120; or, if we include Theological Seminaries and Law Schools, 209. The number of students in all the colleges of the United States is, according to the Almanac of 1850, 10,770. In 1840, it was 9,223.

that a college education is no longer highly prized. Above all, we find nothing in the character (generally speaking) of the alumni of these institutions, in the positions which they hold in society in after life, or in the manner in which they discharge the duties of those positions, which warrants the belief, that a college education is of any less intrinsic value at this time than it was, and is admitted to have been, before our Revolution; especially when it must be allowed by every candid and thorough examiner, that far less was taught then than now. We submit, therefore, that we have other and better reasons than a blind attachment to things as they are for remonstrating against any sudden and radical change in our present collegiate system, and for maintaining, till the contrary shall be proved by actual experiment, the great utility of an extensive and thorough general education.

- ART. III. — 1. *Principles of Zoölogy, touching the Structure, Development, Distribution, and Natural Arrangement of the Races of Animals, Living and Extinct.* Part I. *Comparative Physiology.* By LOUIS AGASSIZ and AUGUSTUS A. GOULD. Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln. 1848. 12mo. pp. 216.
2. *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.* Second Meeting, held at Cambridge, August, 1849. Boston: H. Flanders & Co. 1850. 8vo. pp. 459.
3. *The Foot-Prints of the Creator, or the Asterolepis of Stromness.* By HUGH MILLER, Author of "The Old Red Sandstone," etc. *With a Memoir of the Author.* By LOUIS AGASSIZ. Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln. 1850. 12mo. pp. 337.

IF the condition of humanity is under the control of Providence, and if that Providence be beneficent, and have the power to carry its will into effect, then must that condition always be progressive. And mankind is at every moment in some determinate stage of its progress. In some ages this progress may be more obvious than in others. In some, it may be exhibited by an incontestable and salient advance,